

HOUSE BILL 98

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HB 439/02 - CGM

2003 Regular Session
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By: **Delegates Bronrott, Franchot, Hixson, Murray, Aumann, Barkley, Bromwell, G. Clagett, V. Clagett, Cryor, DeBoy, Dumais, Feldman, Frush, Goldwater, Guterrez, Hubbard, Kaiser, Kelley, King, Lee, Madaleno, Mandel, Menes, Moe, Montgomery, Nathan-Pulliam, Paige, Rudolph, Simmons, Sophocleus, Taylor, and Vaughn**

Introduced and read first time: January 23, 2003

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Designations - Walking as the State Exercise**

3 FOR the purpose of designating walking as the State exercise.

4 BY adding to

5 Article - State Government

6 Section 13-318

7 Annotated Code of Maryland

8 (1999 Replacement Volume and 2002 Supplement)

9 Preamble

10 WHEREAS, Heart disease is the number one cause of death each year in
11 Maryland, and thousands of Maryland citizens suffer from disease and other health
12 problems as a result of a lack of physical activity; and

13 WHEREAS, Mortality rates from coronary artery disease in Maryland rank in
14 the top one-third in the nation with more than 14,000 people dying annually,
15 including one-third before the age of 65; and

16 WHEREAS, Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating are leading risk factors
17 that contribute to at least 300,000 preventable deaths each year in the U.S.; and

18 WHEREAS, In 2000, approximately 26% of Americans and 24% of
19 Marylanders engaged in no leisure time physical activity; and

20 WHEREAS, In 1998, the obesity rate in Maryland was greater than 15%; and

21 WHEREAS, In the United States, the number of adults and children who are
22 overweight has risen sharply over the past 25 years, and the percentage of adults and
23 children who make trips on foot dropped during that same time period; and

1 WHEREAS, Health care costs related to cardiovascular disease in Maryland
2 are \$2.25 billion yearly, and the nationwide costs attributed to obesity are \$99 billion,
3 \$52 billion in direct health costs and \$47 billion in indirect costs annually; and

4 WHEREAS, If all inactive Americans were to participate in physical activity,
5 an estimated \$76.6 billion in direct health costs would be saved; and

6 WHEREAS, More than 10% of children are overweight, and encouraging
7 children to walk more can establish more physically active and healthy lifestyles; and

8 WHEREAS, Suicide is one of the top 10 leading causes of death, and physical
9 activity reduces feelings of depression and anxiety; and

10 WHEREAS, The U.S. Surgeon General recommends that all Americans walk
11 at least 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week; and

12 WHEREAS, Walking is one of the best forms of exercise because it helps
13 reduce cholesterol, improve cardiovascular fitness, improve blood pressure, reduce
14 the risk of heart attack, and prevent colon cancer, osteoporosis, and Type 2 diabetes;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, 348,000 Maryland residents have Type 2 diabetes, and walking 30
17 minutes a day cuts the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by 58%; and

18 WHEREAS, Walking is ideally suited for rehabilitation after illness, surgery,
19 or injury by strengthening the heart, lungs, and circulatory system; and

20 WHEREAS, The risk of injury while walking is less than with other forms of
21 physical activity, and injuries while walking are less severe than with many other
22 exercises; and

23 WHEREAS, Walking is a fun activity that friends and family can do together;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, Walking promotes informal interactions between people and
26 strengthens community, and many neighborhoods lack any social contact between
27 neighbors; and

28 WHEREAS, Walking is a natural activity that does not require any specialized
29 equipment or training and is an inexpensive physical activity that most Maryland
30 citizens can do easily, at any time during the day; and

31 WHEREAS, Walking is as close to a universal physical activity as there is and
32 can be easily integrated into the daily routine of most Marylanders; and

33 WHEREAS, Most people in Maryland already walk every day and a person can
34 engage in other activities while walking, such as meeting and greeting neighbors,
35 talking with friends and family, observing nature or the community, and running
36 errands or shopping; and

1 WHEREAS, Environments that encourage walking help to promote tourism
2 and commerce; and

3 WHEREAS, Increased walking is an important facet of livable and sustainable
4 communities; and

5 WHEREAS, Walking is an environmentally friendly method of transportation,
6 which helps to reduce reliance on automobiles while cutting traffic congestion and air
7 pollution; and

8 WHEREAS, Walking as a symbol for Maryland will benefit individual citizens
9 and Maryland as a whole; now, therefore,

10 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
11 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

12 **Article - State Government**

13 13-318.

14 WALKING IS THE STATE EXERCISE.

15 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take
16 effect October 1, 2003.